



# Law Enforcement

## Chapter 3

Ensuring the right of all people to safely use, share and enjoy Wisconsin's natural resources through firm, fair and effective law enforcement, education, and partnerships with individuals and groups.

The Fish and Wildlife Account pays for \$15.3 million or 64 percent of the law enforcement program's \$23.7 million budget and 154 of its 226 positions.

The remaining 72 positions and \$8.4 million are provided through the Environmental Fund, Recycling Fund, boat, snowmobile and ATV registration fees, Federal grants, general tax funds and the rest of the Conservation Fund.

### Where does your Fish and Wildlife money go?

(in millions of dollars)

Enforce fishing hunting and trapping laws	12.8
Inform and educate the public	0.2
Provide hunter education	0.9
Manage car-killed deer disposal	0.4
Pay program operations costs	0.9
Total	\$15.2

### How is law enforcement work funded?

Funding Source	\$ (in millions)	%
Fish and Wildlife Fund		
License Fees	14.3	61
Federal Grants-Pittman Robertson Hunter Safety	0.9	3
Subtotal, Fish and Wildlife Fund	15.2	64
Rest of the Conservation Fund	3.8	15
General Taxes (GPR)	3.4	15
Environmental Fund	1.1	5
Recycling Fund	0.1	1
Total	23.6	100

### What did the Law Enforcement program accomplish for you in 2003-2004?

#### Enforce wildlife, fish and trapping laws:

Conservation wardens protect Wisconsin's natural resources and help ensure fair hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities. We check hunters, anglers and trappers for the required licenses, and ensure that people follow Wisconsin bag and season limits and laws governing methods of taking game.

Wardens are responsible for reviewing applications and conducting inspections and audits in connection with special permits and licenses.

Wardens field thousands of citizen complaints about poaching and other violations of

hunting, fishing and public safety regulations annually. Wardens rely on the public to be a key player in the apprehension of people who take advantage of the State's natural resources. Wardens also protect habitat and public health by enforcing environmental and recreational safety laws with funds from other funding sources.

Wardens continue to assist in department efforts to combat chronic wasting disease by enforcing baiting and feeding laws, inspecting fences at all deer farms in the state, removing escaped captive deer from the landscape and other population reduction efforts. This work will remain important in the future if we are to reduce the potential for future outbreaks.

We also continue to annually re-certify our wardens in new laws, investigative techniques, firearm skills and proficiency. Warden supervisors coach and direct field wardens to ensure our resources are used efficiently and effectively and laws are enforced fairly and consistently across the state.

**Inform and educate the public:** Informing people about Wisconsin's fish and wildlife regulations is an important part of our duties. In addition to one-on-one contact, wardens present this information at schools, conservation clubs, civic organizations and other group meetings and work with radio, TV and newspapers. Often wardens have regular columns in local newspapers to share timely information about regulations. Wardens also worked at the State Fair, Ducks Unlimited Great Outdoors Festival and local county fairs. These efforts allow wardens to reach over several million people each year.

**Provide hunter education:** An important priority for our law enforcement program is to continue to promote responsible conduct among natural resource users.

Wisconsin's hunting accident rate has fallen 90 percent since our Hunter Safety program began in 1967. The 2004 deer season was also the safest deer season on record, with only five hunting-related accidents. More than 818,000 students have graduated from Wisconsin's hunter education courses in the last 37 years. Wisconsin DNR boasts the largest instructor corps in North America (approximately 5,000 volunteers) that teach classes. Wardens assist in recruiting new instructors to coordinate the program, publicize safe hunting practices and make presentations during class time.

The department has developed and offers alternate ways to help people obtain hunter

education certifications, such as through the Internet. While these delivery methods are useful, we do require that students completing a hunter education course this way complete one field day for training and evaluation so we can assess how prepared they are for using firearms while hunting. The hunter education program also provides access to shooting ranges through cooperative efforts with clubs.

**Manage vehicle-killed deer disposal:** In recent years, vehicle-deer crashes have killed more than 45,000 deer each year. We contract to have unclaimed deer hauled away from the roadside and disposed of. In 2003-04, we awarded contracts worth \$625,000 -- half of which comes from general tax revenue -- to dispose of deer across the state.

**Pay program operation costs:** Planning enforcement work, cooperating with other DNR programs, and paying for equipment, repairs, gas, insurance and salary adjustments are all vital to getting the job done. Without these basic services and tools, our wardens stationed statewide would not be able to do their jobs of protecting wildlife and habitat.

## **Budget reductions in 2003-2004**

**Fewer conservation wardens:** To reduce operations costs, and to carry out budget reductions required in the 2003-05 State Biennial Budget, no new recruit wardens were hired in 2003 or 2004. Consequently, we'll go into 2005 with nearly 30 vacancies. A small recruit class was hired in 2005, but we anticipate five additional retirements that year -- leading to approximately 24 vacancies into 2006. Filling these vacancies will be a priority in order to ensure protection of Wisconsin's natural resources and the safety of people who enjoy them.

**Reduced incident responses by wardens:** Budget constraints also are significantly reducing the response capacity of the warden service. For example, in 2004 our field operations budget was 8 percent less than it was in 1994, without any adjustments for inflation. At the same time, mileage rates have increased 16 percent since 1994.

## Where are we going in 2004–2005?

**Enforce wildlife, fishing, trapping laws:** 2005 starts the 126<sup>th</sup> year of Wisconsin's warden service. The warden force has adjusted to changing times and we are proud to continue protecting Wisconsin's natural resources and those who enjoy them.

**Local focus:** We will continue to focus on "community wardening," which encourages conservation wardens to become actively involved in local organizations and in building partnerships with citizens, public officials, media, legislators and private and public groups in their area.

**Promoting the future of hunting, fishing and trapping:** Wardens will spend more time promoting enjoyable outdoor experiences to help pass on the outdoor legacy to future generations.

**Protect natural resources:** Wardens will continue to devote more effort to preventing the commercialization of natural resources, and to stem the introduction of exotic and invasive species to protect Wisconsin's outdoor heritage and its tourism-related economy.

**Recruit wardens to fill vacancies:** A small new class of recruits was hired in 2005, which will start the process of refilling depleted ranks. Whether other vacancies can be filled depends on lawmakers' approval of proposed increases in hunting and fishing license fees. For more information on this issue, please visit the DNR Web site at <http://dnr.wi.gov/invest>.

We will continue to make the best use of available technologies to help us perform our duties and serve the public as efficiently and quickly as possible.

In addition to fish and game funding sources, other funding sources provide for 93 other conservation wardens and staff who, in addition to fish and game duties, devote time to habitat, environmental protection and recreational public safety duties that benefit all citizens and our natural resources.